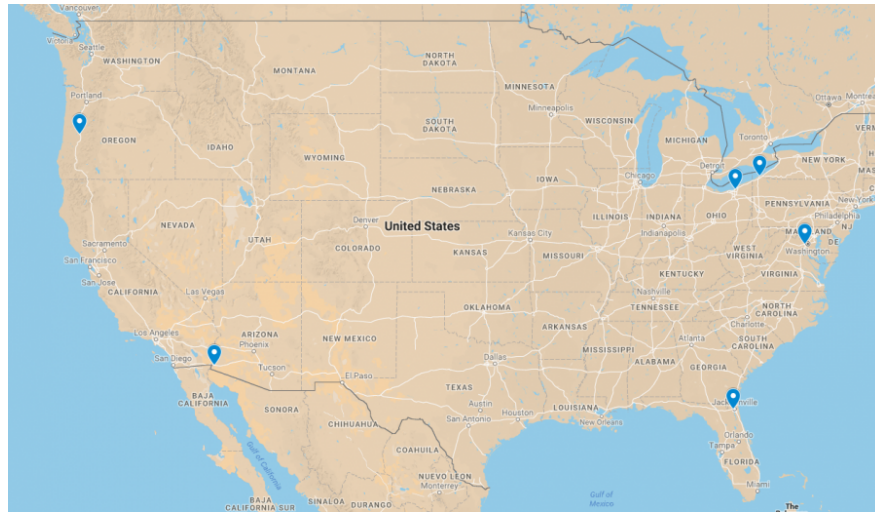


# I AM NAVY MEDICINE: CMDR. LESLIE KINDLING

I'm a native of Erie, Pennsylvania and have always been interested in the military and in aviation. I started my undergraduate studies at Case Western Reserve University in mechanical and aerospace engineering, and quickly switched to biomedical engineering when I realized I could study how the body moves. This is something that fascinated me as an athlete. In graduate school at the University of Oregon, I studied exercise and movement science with a concentration in biomechanics and joined the Army Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC). I was interested in joining the Army after grad school however, an Air Force major I worked with in my lab suggested I look at what the other services had to offer. He found a Navy recruiter who matched my background with Aerospace Physiology.



*A map of Cmdr. Kindling's journey*

Once the Navy recruiter described their aerospace physiology program to me, I knew it was a perfect fit for my interests.

When I joined the Navy, I was expecting to spend all of my time in Navy commands on Naval Stations, but I actually spent 15 of my 19 years in Marine Corps units or on Marine Corps Air Stations.



*Cmdr. Kindling co-pilots during a training session at Marine Aviation Weapons Tactics Squadron One (Photo courtesy of Cmdr. Leslie Kindling)*

I have had a lot of great jobs, from working at Navy Medicine's Aviation Survival Training Centers to becoming one of the first female instructors at the Marine Corps' graduate-level weapons school, Marine Aviation Weapons Tactics Squadron One.

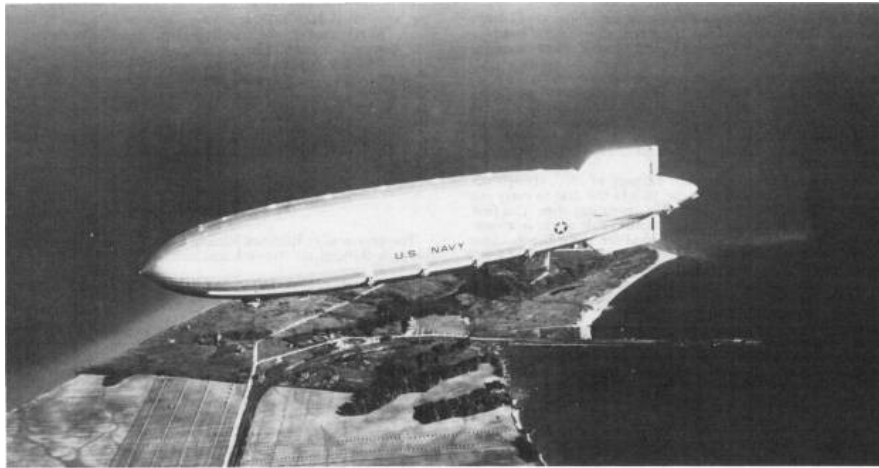


*(Photo courtesy of Cmdr. Kindling)*

Currently, I work as the Naval Aerospace and Operational Physiology program manager and specialty leader at the U.S. Navy's Bureau of Medicine and Surgery just outside of Washington D.C.

Now that I'm in the DC area, I'm able to volunteer time with Honor Flight Southland, a non-profit that brings World War II veterans from California to Washington, to see the national monuments and reflect on their service.

My father was born in Berlin, Germany in 1942 during World War II. His father was an aeronautical engineer there in the air ministry, and worked on zeppelins, blimps and early helicopters. He was a helmsman on Graf Zeppelin's 1927 transatlantic flight to the United States, and worked in Akron, Ohio from 1930-1935 when the airships Akron and Macon were built for the U.S. Navy.



*USS Akron(ZR-4) over Maryland's Eastern Shore, in 1931 (Photo courtesy of Naval History and Heritage Command)*

During the air raids of Germany in the spring of 1945, my grandfather's family was spending time in the basement of their home with neighbors. At the end of the war, my grandfather was captured by the British and became an interpreter for them. In exchange for his help, they gave him a car and a driver, so he could go pick up his family and move to a safer area. In 1950, with the sponsorship of friends from his time in Ohio, my grandfather was able to immigrate to the U.S. with his wife and five children.



*Cmdr. Kindling with a Marine Corps veteran during her volunteer time with Honor Flight Southland (Photo courtesy of Cmdr. Leslie Kindling)*

I volunteer with Honor Flight as a way to honor World War II veterans and their contributions, because I wouldn't be here in the United States doing what I do if weren't for their sacrifice.

I love my job! The experiences and opportunities to mentor others and help them find their "why" have been the most fulfilling part of my Navy career.

I am Commander Leslie Kindling. I am Navy Medicine.